United Nations A/65/78–E/2010/68

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 May 2010

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session
Item 17 of the preliminary list*
Information and communications technologies for development

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2010
New York, 28 June-23 July 2010
Agenda item 13 (b)**
Economic and environmental questions: science and technology for development

Continuation of the Internet Governance Forum

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 60/252, the General Assembly endorsed the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its second phase, in which the Secretary-General was requested to establish the Internet Governance Forum and to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum, in formal consultation with Forum participants, within five years of its creation, and make recommendations to the United Nations membership in that regard. The present note responds to that request.

Having held formal consultations with Forum participants, the Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly extend the mandate of the Forum. In addition, based on the views expressed by participants, a number of improvements to its format, functions and operations should also be considered.

* A/65/50.
** E/2010/100.

10-35473 (E) 260510

Please recycle

I. Background

1. The concept of Internet governance emerged in the international arena at a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society in February 2003. In 2005, at the conclusion of the Tunis phase of the World Summit, Internet governance was provisionally defined by Member States as the development and application by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.

2. Member States recognized that Internet governance, carried out according to the Declaration of Principles adopted at the Geneva phase of the World Summit (see A/C.2/59/3, annex), was an essential element for a people-centred, inclusive, development-oriented and non-discriminatory information society, and committed themselves to ensuring the requisite legitimacy of its governance, based on the full participation of all stakeholders, from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities.

3. The public policy issues articulated in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (see A/60/687) relating to Internet governance illustrate its broad scope. Beyond Internet naming and addressing, the Tunis Agenda explicitly mentions such issues as management of critical Internet resources, the security and safety of the Internet, accessibility and affordability, technical and regulatory matters, consumer protection, equitable development for all and a range of other development challenges requiring international cooperation and dialogue with many different stakeholders.

4. In order to better understand the issues related to Internet governance and promote dialogue among stakeholders in an open and inclusive manner, Member States decided to establish the Internet Governance Forum, convened by the Secretary-General.[1] The main function of the Forum is to discuss public policy issues relating to key elements of Internet governance, such as those enumerated in the Tunis Agenda, in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet in developed and developing countries. The Forum was not to replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations. It was intended to constitute a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process, and have no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the Internet.

5. Given its unique nature as a multi-stakeholder platform, there was no ready template to copy for the convening of the Forum. Therefore, to fulfil the mandate given to him, the Secretary-General asked his Special Adviser for Internet Governance to start broad-based consultations on this mandate, with the aim of developing a common understanding among all stakeholders on the nature and character of the new entity.

6. Through the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group, which was established by the Secretary-General in 2006 and acts as the bureau of the Forum, a common understanding evolved of how the Forum should operate and what issues it should

[1] The mandate of the Internet Governance Forum was defined in paragraphs 72, 73 and 77 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (see A/60/687), adopted at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/252.

address. The Advisory Group has 56 members nominated by different stakeholder groups taking into consideration geographical and gender balance. The programme of the annual meeting of the Forum is prepared by the Advisory Group. It has been the practice of the Group to meet three times a year chaired by the Special Adviser for Internet Governance.

7. The Internet Governance Forum and the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group are supported by a secretariat headed by an Executive Coordinator and reporting to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management. The secretariat is funded by voluntary contributions and is physically located at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

8. The Forum holds an annual conference of stakeholders. The first meeting was held in Athens in 2006, the second in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007, the third in Hyderabad, India, in 2008 and the fourth in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009. The Government of Lithuania will host the fifth annual meeting of the Forum in Vilnius from 14 to 17 September 2010. Meetings are held on a different continent each year in order to facilitate broad-based participation.

II. Taking stock of the Internet Governance Forum

9. When the Forum was created in 2006, it was given a lifespan of five years, after which Member States would review the desirability of its continuation. In paragraph 76 of the Tunis Agenda, the Secretary-General was asked to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum, in formal consultation with Forum participants, within five years of its creation, and to make recommendations to the United Nations membership in that regard. The Secretary-General has therefore examined the merits and shortcomings of the Forum taking into account the views of its many participants.

10. The formal consultations were initiated online in June 2009, starting with a questionnaire prepared by the secretariat of the Forum. A note verbale was subsequently addressed to all diplomatic missions accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva, soliciting input from all Member States. A total of 62 written submissions were received following these calls for public comment, of which 45 responded to the online questionnaire. Contributions were received from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and organizations representing civil society and the private sector, including representatives of the academic and technical communities. Comments were also received from a number of individuals.

11. In November 2009, a formal consultation with Internet Governance Forum participants was convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs during the fourth meeting of the Forum, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. From among the different stakeholder groups, 47 speakers delivered short statements. Eight statements of participants who were not given a speaking slot owing to time constraints were posted online. In addition, seven statements were submitted after the consultations. The total number of contributions over the six-month consultation period from May to December 2009 was thus 124.

12. A majority of those who participated in the formal consultation during the fourth meeting of the Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh, or who provided written

contributions, expressed support for its continuation. Of the stakeholders who contributed comments, 28 per cent called for continuation of the Forum in its present state, 68 per cent called for continuation with improvements, and 3 per cent indicated that their support for continuation would be conditional on a number of reforms. Most stakeholders were of the opinion that the mandate of the Forum, if extended, should continue for at least another five years. One stakeholder recommended a shorter time frame of two to three years in order to evaluate results more regularly. A summary of views of stakeholders and distribution of contributions by stakeholder group are given in tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1
Summary of views of stakeholders participating in the Internet Governance Forum stocktaking exercise, May-December 2009

General position	*Number of contributors*	*Percentage of contributors*
Extension as is	24	28
Extension with improvement	59	68
No extension without major reform	3	3
No opinion	1	1
Total	**87**	**100**

Table 2
Distribution of contributors to the Internet Governance Forum stocktaking exercise by stakeholder group

Stakeholder group[a]	*Number of contributors*	*Percentage of contributors*
Governments	26	30
Intergovernmental organizations	11	13
Private sector firms	9	10
Civil society organizations	41	47
Total	**87**	**100**

[a] Figures should be considered approximate as meetings of the Internet Governance Forum do not follow a formal accreditation procedure. Some stakeholders indicated that they were acting in a personal capacity.

13. According to many participants, the Forum's multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent character is unique and valuable and should be preserved. Inclusiveness is a fundamental principle underlying development of an information society for all, as envisaged at the World Summit, and a durable attribute of Internet governance appreciated by all stakeholder groups. It is a place where Governments, civil society, the private sector and international organizations discuss important questions of economic and social development. They share their insights and achievements. Above all, they build a common understanding of the Internet's great potential while addressing the many risks and challenges in its governance.

14. In its resolution 64/187, the General Assembly encouraged strengthened and continuing cooperation among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit. In particular, the Assembly encouraged promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms in a joint effort and dialogue with developing and least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communications technologies sector.

15. The most significant concerns expressed by stakeholders were that the Internet Governance Forum, despite its role in promoting dialogue and understanding, had not devoted sufficient attention to its development remit or the specific question of management of critical Internet resources, that the Forum had not provided concrete advice to intergovernmental bodies and other entities involved in Internet governance, and that more needed to be done to engage stakeholders in Internet governance mechanisms, especially stakeholders from developing countries.

16. It should be noted that the Forum and the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group have both made an effort at the start of each annual planning cycle to examine the working methods of the Forum and improve upon them. For example, each meeting was followed by a broad-based stocktaking discussion, looking at what worked well and what worked less well in order to document lessons learned that would then be fed into the planning of the subsequent meeting and its preparatory processes.

III. Recommendations

17. Given the previous views expressed by the General Assembly on the question of multi-stakeholder dialogue and the strong support for an open discussion forum on public policy issues related to Internet governance among those who participated in the consultations, the Secretary-General recommends:

(a) That the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum be extended for a further five years;

(b) That the desirability of continuation be considered again by Member States within the context of a 10-year review of implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2015;

(c) That improvements to the format, functions and operations of the Forum be considered at the Forum's sixth meeting, in 2011.

18. Three areas of concern are described in more detail in the following section along with further recommendations of the Secretary-General in the relevant areas. Other improvements, such as the membership and rules of procedure of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group, which the Secretary-General was requested to convene in paragraph 78 (c) of the Tunis Agenda, may be within the authority of the Secretary-General to address. Where this is the case, it has been indicated that Member States may wish to take note in their deliberations of changes that are within the purview of the Secretariat or participants of the Forum themselves.

A. Identification of key public policy issues related to Internet governance

19. When the Internet Governance Forum was established, it was given significant latitude in setting its own agenda, with the obvious constraint that its programme of work needed to relate to key elements of Internet governance. Although not stated explicitly in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, which conveys the mandate of the Forum, the establishment of the Forum as an outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society implies that the Forum should contribute to a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society" with respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. These underlying aims were articulated in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and later reaffirmed in paragraphs 29 and 31 of the Tunis Agenda, as a preamble to commitments by Member States on Internet governance matters.

20. The mandate of the Forum provides further guidance on the kind of public policy issues the Forum should consider. Although not intended to be an exhaustive list of agenda items, specific reference is made to:

(a) The sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;

(b) The availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;

(c) Emerging issues;

(d) Assessment of the embodiment of principles of the World Summit on the Information Society in Internet governance processes;

(e) Issues relating to critical Internet resources;

(f) Issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet of particular concern to everyday users.

21. Over the past five years, the agenda of the Forum has converged towards a set of standing items embodying these original terms of reference. The inclusive and participatory approach to agenda-setting among stakeholders in the Advisory Group has resulted in validation of the range of key public policy issues related to Internet governance articulated at the World Summit.

22. However, since the Forum was established there has been considerable refinement in the delineation of these issues and in the understanding of their interrelationships. For example, in 2006 the issues of openness and security were discussed separately, whereas from 2008 onwards these two questions have been addressed together, along with privacy, in recognition of the connections among such subsidiary topics as access to knowledge, freedom of expression, intellectual property rights, Internet crime and State security.

23. Emphasis has also shifted among topics within the larger issue areas. Whereas multilingualism was given considerable attention in 2008 in connection with the broader subject of diversity, in 2010 the provisional programme gives significantly greater weight to infrastructural and regulatory matters under the access and diversity heading. Similarly, spam featured prominently in discussions of security in 2006, whereas in the 2010 programme security has been expanded to include the more general question of regulation of malicious Internet content.

Table 3
Agenda of the Internet Governance Forum, 2006-2010

Issue area	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*
Openness	Openness	Openness	Promoting cyber-security and trust	Openness, privacy and security	Openness, privacy and security
Privacy	—	—			
Security	Security	Security			
Access	Access	Access	Reaching the next billion	Access and diversity	Access and diversity
Diversity	Diversity	Diversity			
Critical Internet resources	—	Critical Internet resources	Managing critical Internet resources	Managing critical Internet resources	Managing critical Internet resources
Emerging issues	Emerging issues	Emerging issues	The Internet of tomorrow	Impact of social networks	Cloud computing
Internet governance	—	—	—	Internet governance in light of World Summit on the Information Society principles	Internet governance for development
Taking stock	The way forward	Taking stock and the way forward	Taking stock and the way forward	Taking stock and looking forward	Taking stock of Internet governance and the way forward

24. Many participants consider the wide-ranging, interconnected nature of the agenda of the Forum to be a strength that has led to considerable maturation of the understanding of the issues by stakeholders. At the same time, some observers feel that the Forum has not given sufficient attention to the development and human rights dimensions of Internet governance. This may be the result of the relative dominance of technical specialists in the Forum and the relative absence of development and human rights practitioners. Invitations to attend meetings of the Forum are addressed to Governments, international organizations, entities accredited to the World Summit and other institutions and persons with proven expertise and experience in matters related to Internet governance.

25. Other participants question whether the agenda of the Forum is sufficiently specific for the purposes of informing public policymaking. For example, some participants would like to have more time devoted to dialogue on issues such as freedom of expression and gender equality. Others would prefer more discussion of particular topics in crime prevention or the question of cost and affordability of Internet access. While all such suggestions are by definition valid given the open-

ended nature of the mandate of the Forum, they may point as much to a desire for more tangible progress on the issues at hand as to the need for continued dialogue.

26. The issue of enhanced cooperation, another World Summit outcome enshrined in the Tunis Agenda, is one such issue of concern to many stakeholders, specifically as it relates to the management of critical Internet resources. Some stakeholders felt that the Forum had contributed to enhanced cooperation among all institutions dealing with Internet governance issues. Others felt the Forum should address this issue as a matter of priority and make recommendations to the relevant intergovernmental organizations and other institutions accordingly.

27. It is evident from the consultations that there continues to be confusion as to the meaning of enhanced cooperation. Some interpret enhanced cooperation as dialogue among Governments on public policy issues related to the Internet. Others interpret it to mean improved dialogue among Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, possibly in multiple Internet governance mechanisms, including at the regional and national levels.

28. Finally, there is a perception among some civil society stakeholders that the agenda-setting process of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group is not sufficiently inclusive or transparent. Given that concern, the Secretary-General may undertake a review of the structure and functions of the preparatory meetings of the Forum, through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in cooperation with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for Internet Governance and the members of the Advisory Group, with due regard to the convening of an effective and cost-efficient bureau, as called for in paragraph 78 (b) of the Tunis Agenda.

29. In consideration of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends:

(a) That the General Assembly reaffirm the multiple dimensions of the agenda of the Internet Governance Forum and provide guidance on public policy issues related to Internet governance that should be given particular consideration in the next five years;

(b) That the General Assembly provide guidance on "enhanced cooperation" as it relates to the Forum, on how the Secretary-General could best assist Member States in this regard, and on which organizations would be relevant to the process;

(c) That the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report, at its sixty-sixth session, on steps taken to improve the format, functions and operations of the preparatory meetings of the Forum, with a view to enhancing inclusiveness, transparency, effectiveness and cost-efficiency while ensuring balanced stakeholder representation and participation.

B. Contribution to national and international public policymaking

30. The Tunis Agenda specifies that the Forum is to interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview, advise stakeholders on ways of accelerating the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world, and bring emerging issues to the attention of the relevant bodies. All of these functions are intended, inter alia, to support Governments in the development of public policy.

31. Some argue that even though the Forum has no decision-making authority, it offers an inclusive environment for discussing problems of common interest drawing on expert knowledge of the Internet. Some observers have suggested that it thus contributes indirectly to finding solutions and to shaping decisions taken elsewhere. For example, the work of the Forum has been reflected in two ministerial declarations, one of the Council of Europe and the other of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Many stakeholders have noted, however, that the contribution of the Forum to public policymaking is difficult to assess and appears to be weak.

32. In response, many government and civil society stakeholders from both developed and developing regions have suggested the need for more tangible outcomes of meetings of the Forum, specifically in the form of written outputs. While emphasizing that the non-decision-making nature of the Forum is valuable and that the Forum should not be transformed into a negotiating body with agreed conclusions or joint communiqués, it could nonetheless contribute more effectively in the form of advice and recommendations, as provided for in various articles of its mandate.

33. With respect to communicating outcomes of the Forum to the relevant national or international entities, the mandate includes a provision for the Forum to interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters within their purview. Particular mention is made in the Tunis Agenda of the relevance of the United Nations given the role of the Organization in the promotion of security, development and human rights. The International Telecommunication Union is singled out in the Geneva Declaration for its core competencies in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information.

34. Other stakeholders have proposed regularization of the budget of the Forum within the United Nations or even transforming the Forum into a formal body within the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations as means of strengthening the connection with public policymaking. This would have the effect of giving Member States the authority to request specific reports from the Forum in a format suitable for intergovernmental deliberations.

35. In consideration of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly encourage the Internet Governance Forum to produce and offer to the Member States useful capacity-building outputs, such as offline and online training and toolkits aiming at greater awareness and better understanding of issues related to Internet governance to facilitate national and international public policymaking.

C. Engagement of stakeholders in Internet governance mechanisms

36. The Forum is mandated in accordance with paragraph 72 (f) of the Tunis Agenda to strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries. The Agenda enumerates four groups of stakeholders, namely Governments, intergovernmental and other international organizations, the private sector and civil society, which are only very loosely associated. Central to the identity of the Forum is the idea of the Forum as a meeting of equals.

37. Its advantage, in the view of many, is that freed from the constraints of negotiation and formal accreditation of representatives, an open exchange of ideas is possible among people who might be able to take action in other venues. This enables participants to gain a better grasp of both commonality and difference in their positions and opinions, thus enabling the Forum to influence and inform stakeholders without having to be subject to the constraints of negotiation and creating policy consensus.

38. The disadvantage for many participants, however, is the question of the efficacy of the free-flowing debate, which in 2009 had a large number of workshops, panels and events concentrated in a three-day session with approximately 1,400 participants. As a result of the wide-ranging agenda that characterizes the Forum, there tends to be a lack of focus on key elements of Internet governance. As a practical matter, many participants have called for a more streamlined approach to the meeting sessions and workshops, as well as more synthesis of meeting discussions.

39. Some concern was expressed that the link between the workshops and the main sessions was not as clear or as strong as could have been expected. The workshops offered a wealth of information and opinion, but these inputs turned out to shape the debate in the main sessions only to a limited extent. A number of self-organized and informal "dynamic coalitions" discuss particular issues between annual meetings, but these were neither appropriate nor successful as a mechanism for accommodating real ongoing debate.

40. In addition, in connection with stakeholder participation and representation, it is not clear whether the current format and working methods of the Forum are conducive to dialogue among all interested stakeholders, including, particularly, non-participating stakeholders, or provide for equitable participation and representation of stakeholders.

41. In particular, with regard to developing countries, paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda asked the Secretary-General to advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world; strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries; and contribute to capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise.

42. As seen in table 4, participation in the Internet Governance Forum is broad-based but somewhat uneven. A particular concern of Member States, as expressed in the Tunis Agenda and echoed by stakeholders, is the relative absence of participants from developing countries. This shortcoming applies both to governmental and non-governmental entities. Of the 83 Governments represented at the fourth meeting of the Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 50 were from developing regions. Some 110 Member States did not participate, a majority of which were developing countries.

Table 4
Participation in the fourth meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, November 2009)

Stakeholder group	*Number of countries or areas*	*Number of delegations*	*Number of participants*
Governments			
Developed countries	32	46	136
Africa[a]	21	53	272
Asia and the Pacific (other than Commonwealth of Independent States)	22	41	88
Commonwealth of Independent States	3	5	7
Latin America and the Caribbean	6	11	26
Subtotal	**84**	**156**	**529**
International organizations			
United Nations system	—	16	52
Other international organizations	—	17	63
Subtotal	**—**	**33**	**115**
Private sector			
Developed regions	17	70	119
Africa[a]	5	29	49
Asia and the Pacific (other than Commonwealth of Independent States)	8	14	15
Commonwealth of Independent States	0	0	0
Latin America and the Caribbean	2	2	3
Subtotal	**32**	**115**	**188**
Civil society			
Developed regions	23	171	317
Africa[a]	16	50	111
Asia and the Pacific (other than Commonwealth of Independent States)	18	42	76
Commonwealth of Independent States	3	5	9
Latin America and the Caribbean	11	15	26
Subtotal	**71**	**283**	**544**
Total	**106**	**585**	**1 376**

Note: Figures should be considered approximate as the Internet Governance Forum meetings do not follow a formal accreditation procedure.

[a] Includes host country, Egypt.

43. This relative absence of participants from developing countries is attributable to their lack of travel funds and lack of capacity, especially their lack of essential expertise to engage in Internet governance issues. The programme of the Forum

covers technical issues and matters related to economic and social development policy. More often than not participants are not competent in both areas, although they may have a strong interest in and benefit substantially from exposure to other fields. Even within a particular area of interest, such as network security, some participants are necessarily better equipped to benefit from consultations at the Forum than others. Given the limited attention paid to capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries, there is a concern among some stakeholders that the economic and social development perspective may have been overshadowed by attention to technical matters.

44. There were some contributions to and efforts in respect of capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries. For example, voluntary funding was provided by some donors for attendance at meetings, as well as support of dynamic coalitions for youth and disabled persons in both developed and developing countries. In particular, in order to maximize participation of developing country stakeholders, provisions are made for remote access, including regional hub meetings, with an overall improvement in remote participation over the years. The remote hubs were reported to have allowed for parallel sessions that enabled the remote participants to view, participate in and discuss the Forum proceedings.

45. Notwithstanding this progress, the general view is that greater effort should still be made to improve remote participation opportunities, and more resources need to be provided in order to include interested stakeholders who cannot physically attend the meeting.

46. In order to help build the capacity of all stakeholders from all countries to participate in the Forum, calls are made for assistance for their active participation in the meetings of the Forum, including through a better funding mechanism. In this connection, it is also deemed necessary that educational and training resources on a range of Internet governance issues should be provided, and their effective and innovative provision (especially given the lack of access by many developing country stakeholders with little knowledge related to Internet governance) should be explored.

47. The website of the Forum, publications, webcasts of its meetings and provision of simultaneous interpretation in six languages are concrete initiatives taken by the Forum secretariat in consultation with the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group. Providing services for persons with disabilities is also an ongoing operational concern. The Advisory Group is constantly reviewing procedures and trying to improve on the basis of stakeholder feedback.

48. In this context, the increasing spread of national and regional initiatives by the Forum since 2006 should also be noted. Regional meetings similar to meetings of the Forum were held in East Africa (Nairobi), West Africa (Accra) and Central Africa (Brazzaville), in the Latin America and Caribbean region (Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), in the Caribbean (St. Kitts) and in Europe (Geneva and Strasbourg, France). National Forum meetings were held in Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. While all these initiatives were intended to feed into the annual Forum, they also had value in themselves, irrespective of any links to global discussions. It was noted that all regions had different concerns and priorities, with access remaining the top priority issue for the developing world.

49. In consideration of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends:

(a) That the General Assembly invite Member States to provide additional funding to increase participation from developing countries in the Internet Governance Forum;

(b) That the General Assembly encourage Member States to increase support for capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries, including through regional and national Internet governance mechanisms;

(c) That the General Assembly encourage the relevant United Nations system organizations to make a concerted effort to promote capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries, including through enhanced technical assistance and provision of relevant education and training materials.